

II. AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently amended) A system for exchanging automotive information between at least two automotive industry trading partners engaged in an automotive transaction, comprising:

a computer system including a central processing unit, an input/output interface, external devices, and a memory, wherein the memory includes:

a translation system for translating a transaction element sent from a first trading partner intended for a second trading partner specified by the first trading partner, the transaction element being translated from a proprietary schema of the first trading partner into a universal schema and from the universal schema into a proprietary schema of the second trading partner; wherein translation of the transaction element comprises translating a data format and an application format of the transaction element;

a routing system for routing the transaction element from the first trading partner in a first communication protocol to the second trading partner in a second different communication protocol of the second trading partner;

a transaction management system for tracking a status of the transaction element;

and

a security system including a firewall for controlling access to the computer system.

2. (Previously presented) The automotive information exchange system of claim 1, further comprising a mapping system for mapping the transaction element, wherein the mapping system includes a system for determining: a source of the transaction element, an application to which the transaction element is regarding, and a recipient to which the transaction element should be routed.

3. (Canceled)

4. (Previously presented) The automotive information exchange system of claim 1, further comprising:

- a data management system for providing localized data to the trading partners; and
- an administrative system for managing a partner directory of trading partners, wherein the partner directory identifies trading partners and their corresponding locations, transaction element schemas, and communication protocols.

5. (Previously presented) The automotive information exchange system of claim 1, wherein the first trading partner comprises a mechanism for sending the transaction element to the automotive information exchange system.

6. (Previously presented) The automotive information exchange system of claim 5, wherein the second trading partner comprises a mechanism for sending a response transaction element to the automotive information exchange system, and wherein the routing system routes the response element to the first trading partner in a protocol of the first trading partner.

7. (Previously presented) The automotive information exchange system of claim 6, wherein the first and second trading partners are selected from the group consisting of: an automotive manufacturer, an automotive parts locator, an automotive parts supplier, an automotive lending provider, a credit reporter, a motor vehicle department, an automotive insurance provider, and an automotive consumer facilitator.

8. (Original) The automotive information exchange system of claim 7, wherein the transaction element and the response transaction element pertain to an automotive application selected from the group consisting of: automotive parts, automotive sales, automotive service, automotive insurance, automotive registration, automotive financing, automotive warranty, and credit reporting.

9. (Original) The automotive information exchange system of claim 6, wherein the transaction element and the response transaction element contain transaction data pertaining to a predetermined automotive application.

10. (Previously presented) The automotive information exchange system of claim 6, wherein the automotive information exchange system translates the response transaction element from the proprietary schema of the second trading partner to the universal schema and then to the proprietary schema of the first trading partner.

11. (Currently amended) A method for exchanging automotive information between at least two automotive industry trading partners engaged in an automotive transaction, comprising the steps of:

receiving on an automotive information exchange system a transaction element from a first automotive industry trading partner intended for a second automotive industry trading partner specified by the first trading partner, wherein the transaction element relates to an automotive application;

translating the transaction element from a proprietary schema of the first trading partner into a universal schema and from the universal schema into a proprietary schema of the second trading partner, wherein translation of the transaction element includes translating a data format and an application format of the transaction element;

routing the transaction element from the first trading partner in a first communication protocol to the second automotive industry trading partner in a second different communication protocol;

sending a response transaction element from the second automotive industry trading partner to the automotive information exchange system;

routing the response transaction element to the first automotive industry trading partner;

mapping the transaction element and the response transaction element with a mapping system, wherein the mapping comprises identifying the first trading partner, the second trading partner and an application to which the transaction element corresponds;

managing the transaction element and the response transaction element with a transaction management system, wherein the managing step comprises tracking a status of the transaction element and the response transaction element; and

securing the automotive information exchange system with a security system including a firewall for controlling access to the computer system.

12. (Canceled)

13. (Canceled)

14. (Previously presented) The method of claim 11, further comprising translating the response transaction element from the second proprietary schema to the universal schema and then from the universal schema to the first proprietary schema.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently amended) The method of claim 11, wherein the first and second automotive industry trading partners are selected from the group consisting of: an automotive manufacturer, an automotive parts locator, an automotive parts supplier, an automotive lending provider, a

credit reporter, a motor vehicle department, an automotive insurance provider, and an automotive consumer facilitator.

17. (Original) The method of claim 11, wherein the transaction element and the response transaction element pertain to an automotive application selected from the group consisting of: automotive parts, automotive sales, automotive service, automotive insurance, automotive registration, automotive financing, automotive warranty, and credit reporting.

18. (Currently amended) A program product stored on a recordable medium for exchanging automotive information between at least two automotive industry trading partners engaged in an automotive transaction, which when executed, comprises:

- a translation system for translating a transaction element sent from a first trading partner intended for a second trading partner specified by the first trading partner, the transaction element being translated from a proprietary schema of the first trading partner into a universal schema and from the universal schema into a proprietary schema of the second trading partner, wherein translation of the transaction element comprises translating a data format and an application format of the transaction element;

- a routing system for routing the transaction element from the first trading partner in a first communication protocol to the second trading partner in a second different communication protocol of the second trading partner;

- a transaction management system for tracking a status of the transaction element; and

- a security system including a firewall for controlling access to the automotive information.

19. (Previously presented) The program product of claim 18, wherein the first trading partner includes a mechanism for sending the transaction element to the automotive information exchange system.

20. (Previously presented) The program product of claim 18, wherein the first trading partner includes a mechanism for sending the transaction element to the automotive information exchange system.

21. (Previously presented) The program product of claim 20, wherein the first and second automotive parts locator, an automotive parts supplier, an automotive lending provider, a credit reporter, a motor vehicle department, an automotive insurance provider, and an automotive consumer facilitator.

22. (Previously presented) The program product of claim 20, wherein the transaction element and the response transaction element pertain to an automotive application selected from the group consisting of: automotive parts, automotive sales, automotive service, automotive insurance, automotive registration, automotive financing, automotive warranty, and credit reporting.

23. (Previously presented) The program product of claim 18, further comprising a mapping system for mapping a transaction element, wherein the mapping system includes a system for

determining: a source of the transaction element, an application to which the transaction element is regarding and a recipient to which the transaction element should be routed.

24. (Canceled)

25. (Previously presented) The program product of claim 18, further comprising:

- a data management system for providing localized data to the trading partners;
- an administrative system for managing the automotive information exchange system; and
- a partner director system for managing a partner director of trading partners, wherein the partner director identifies trading partners and their corresponding locations, transaction element schemas, and communication protocols.

26. (Currently amended) A computer system for exchanging automotive information between at least two automotive industry trading partners engaged in an automotive transaction, comprising:

- a processor;
- a computer system memory;
- an interface; and
- a software product stored on the computer system memory and executable by the processor, wherein the software product comprises:
 - a translation system for translating a transaction element sent from a first trading partner intended for a second trading partner specified by the first trading partner, the transaction element being translated from a proprietary schema of the first trading partner into a universal schema and from the universal schema into a proprietary schema of the

second trading partner; wherein translation of the transaction element comprises translating a data format and an application format of the transaction element;

a routing system for routing the transaction element from the first trading partner in a first communication protocol to the second trading partner in a second different communication protocol of the second trading partner;

a transaction management system for tracking a status of the transaction element;

and

a security system including a firewall for controlling access to the computer system.

27. (Previously presented) The system of claim 26, wherein the first trading partner includes a mechanism for sending a transaction element to the automotive information exchange system.

28. (Previously presented) The system of claim 27, wherein the second trading partner comprises a mechanism for sending a response transaction element to the automotive information exchange system, and wherein the routing system routes the response element to the first trading partner in a communication protocol of the first trading partner.

29. (Previously presented) The system of claim 28, wherein the first and second trading partners are selected from the group consisting of: an automotive manufacturer, an automotive parts locator, an automotive parts supplier, an automotive lending provider, a credit reporter, a motor vehicle department, an automotive insurance provider, and an automotive consumer facilitator.

30. (Previously presented) The system of claim 28, wherein the transaction element and the response transaction element pertain to an automotive application selected from the group consisting of: automotive parts, automotive sales, automotive service, automotive insurance, automotive registration, automotive financing, automotive warranty, and credit reporting.

31. (Previously presented) The system of claim 26, wherein the software product further comprises:

- a data management system for providing localized data to the trading partners;
- an administrative system for managing the automotive information exchange system; and
- a partner directory system for managing a partner director of trading partners, wherein the partner directory identifies trading partners and their corresponding locations, transaction element schemas, and communication protocols.